


MEMO

TO: Energy and Environment Committee (EEC)
FROM:  Molly Hoffman, Senior Regional Planner, Environmental Planning, hoffman@scag.ca.gov
DATE: September 4, 2003
SUBJECT: 2003 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) Adoption

Recommended Action:

Receive and File

Summary:

The 2003 South Coast Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) was adopted by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) governing board on August 1, 2003. Testimony on the 2003 AQMP was provided by various stakeholders – the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the California Air Resources Board (ARB), SCAG, business and industry groups, environmental organizations and concerned citizens. The 2003 AQMP has now been submitted to ARB for approval and incorporation into the State Implementation Plan (SIP).

Adoption of the South Coast SIP by ARB is scheduled for September 24-25, 2003. The hearing will be held at the AQMD Headquarters. EPA will review the SIP and make its budget adequacy finding subsequent to ARB's adoption. This finding is required in order for SCAG to proceed with its 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) conformity determination.

Background:

The 2003 AQMP was adopted by the AQMD governing board on August 1, 2003. The plan was developed to satisfy both federal and state Clean Air Act requirements, address the attainment demonstration requirements of the federal Clean Air Act for one-hour ozone, PM10 and carbon monoxide and establish transportation emission budgets based on the latest approved motor vehicle emissions inventory model (EMFAC2002) and the latest planning assumptions.

A key finding of the plan shows that while the long-term trend of air quality in the Basin has improved significantly, the federal standards will not be met without significant additional reductions. Of greatest concern is the enormity of the "black box." The black box refers to the long-term emission reduction strategy based on future technology advancements or greater implementation of innovative strategies. The long-term undefined measures make up approximately 80% of the overall emission reduction strategy in the 2003 AQMP.

At the hearing, the environmental organizations expressed their concern over the size of the black box and the excessive reliance on undefined future technologies and strategies. The environmental

MEMO

organizations requested that the plan be delayed 30 days in order to allow time to further define the agency commitments in the black box. This request was denied by the AQMD Board.

Testimony for USEPA was provided by Jack Broadbent, Director, Air Division, USEPA Region 9. USEPA's testimony acknowledged that the federal government can do more to help reduce pollution levels from sources that are legally or practically beyond the reach of State and local regulators. USEPA stated that they are prepared to play an appropriate role in seeking clean air progress in the South Coast and will be a partner in the collaborative process of plan implementation. However, they believe that State and local agencies do not have the authority to assign emission reduction responsibility to the Federal government.

Testimony for the California Air Resources Board (ARB) was provided by Catherine Witherspoon, Executive Officer, ARB. ARB stated that they are prepared to expedite the State Board hearing in response to the region's need for an updated plan to allow federal transportation funding to proceed next year. ARB testified that they are committed to developing effective strategies with local, State and federal partners to bridge the gap in needed emission reductions.

Testimony for SCAG was provided by Mark Pisano, Executive Director of SCAG. SCAG testified that it is committed to its emission reduction of 15 tons per day of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). SCAG acknowledged that activities, such as goods movement, would increase in the 2004 RTP and that further reductions would be generated through land use and growth alternatives. SCAG testified that the region can not afford any loss of transportation funds due to a conformity lapse and the Regional Council supports the efforts of the AQMD.

An AQMD resolution to the 2003 AQMP proposed to establish an "Ad Hoc Board Committee to review and consider SCAG's proposed 2004 RTP and the associated demographic growth assumptions including high speed rail projects and toll road projects for trucks, and to formulate the Board's position to be conveyed through staff's participation in SCAG's 2004 RTP process." SCAG welcomes the AQMD's participation in SCAG's committees and task forces regarding the development of the 2004 RTP.

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